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Mentoring Relationships Amongst Women in Public Relations

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Mentoring Relationships Amongst Women in

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(TITLE)

BY

Kristen Kahles

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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Mentoring Relationships Amongst Women
in the Public Relations Industry

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Abstract

Mentoring is an old tool used to advance the education and/or careers of individuals that dates back to ancient Greece; it has recently reemerged in organizational and business settings. I examine mentoring relationships among women in the public relations profession. In this study my purpose is to determine how women are affected in a same sex mentoring relationship in the public relations field. One hundred surveys were distributed to female practitioners in the New York and Chicago areas. Thirty-five were returned, yielding a 35% response rate. In addition, six in depth interviews were conducted with six female public relations professionals to further investigate same sex mentoring relationships. Qualitative results indicate no significant difference for women in career functions between same sex and cross sex mentoring relationships. However, quantitative results indicate that women benefit differently from the psychosocial functions of same sex mentoring relationships than those provided by cross sex relationships.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, who has always taught me that a woman can do anything. You are my best friend and my mentor. I love you.

Acknowledgments

Without the help of several people this thesis would not have been possible. Special thanks goes to Dr. Melanie Mills, my thesis advisor and mentor, who provided suggestions, advice, and constructive criticism. Dr. Frank Parcells also helped immensely with the direction and construction of this paper. Dr. Doug Bock is yet another wonderful Speech Communication professor who helped to guide this thesis, and without the assistance of his computer, the statistics found in this paper would have been "counterfactual".

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Chapter 1: Literature Review

Definitions of Mentors and Mentoring Relationships

The word "mentor" can be traced to Greek legend. Mentor was "the wise and trusted counselor to whom Odysseus entrusted the education of his son, Telemachus" (Bushardt, Fretwell, & Holdnak, 1991, p. 619).

Throughout history other famous mentoring relationships have emerged such as instructors to interns or students, supervisors to subordinates, and peers to other peers. (Kapustiak, Capello, & Hofmeister, 1985). For example, Plato and Socrates, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, Martin Luther King Jr. and Jessie Jackson and, Susan Faluti and Gloria Steinem are all famous duos that have learned about their fields from one another.

In recent years, mentors and mentoring relationships have been examined and defined in a variety of ways. The literal definition of the word "mentor" is simply "coach" or "teacher" (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1984). An article concerning networking, negotiations, and mentor-mentee relations, Kapustiak, Capello, & Hofmeister (1985) define a mentoring relationship as "one-to-one learning relationships" (p. 846). Bushart, Fretwell, & Holdnak (1991) developed a definition of mentoring relationships from an organizational standpoint claiming that mentorship is a useful relationship that promotes upward mobility in talented individuals. Probably the most popular conceptual definition is from Levinson (1978), who claims a mentoring relationship is the most important factor in helping

young adults to start a career (p. 98). As Levinson states:

"The mentor may act as a teacher to enhance a younger man's (sic) skills and intellectual development. Serving as a sponsor, he may use his influence to promote the young man's entry and advancement. He may be a host and guide, welcoming the initiate into a new occupational and social world and acquainting him with its values, customs, resources, and cast of characters. Through his own virtues, achievement, and way of life, the mentor may be an exemplar that the protege can admire and seek to emulate. He may provide counsel and moral support in times of stress" (p. 98).

After examining these conceptual definitions of mentoring relationships, the following operational definitions were formulated. For the purposes of this study, a mentor can be defined as: Someone who provides guidance, promotes skill development, and helps the technical and political ropes of the public relations business. A protege can be defined as: Someone who has been provided with guidance, and has been taught the technical and political ropes of the public relations industry by a mentor.

Benefits of Mentoring Relationships

Most researchers suggest that mentoring relationships hold benefits for both the mentor and the protege. The relationship has the potential to develop both the careers and psychosocial

aspects in the lives of both the mentor and the protege (Kram, 1983).

Benefits of Acting as a Protege

Having a mentor is important (Olian, Carroll, & Giannantonio, 1993). Kram (1983) indicates that the main beneficiary in the relationship is the protege.

"...the mentor relationship has great potential to facilitate career advancement and psychosocial development in both early and middle adulthood by providing a vehicle for accomplishing these primary developmental tasks" (p. 608).

Lea and Liebowitz's research (1983) agrees with Kram's opinion by noting that the protege can benefit from another's entire career experience.

Olian, Carroll, & Giannantonio (1993) report that, "The absence of mentoring has been related to the 'glass ceiling' problem for women." One reason for this may be that mentors create competence as well as confidence. In a healthy mentoring relationship, women gain independence in their long-term development (Johnsrud, 1990).

Benefits of Acting as a Mentor

While it has been shown through a brief review that the protege in mentoring relationships can prosper, being a mentor can also benefit one's career. Kapustiak, Capello, & Hofmeister (1985) believe that mentors are the main beneficiary because they

"strengthen their career" (p. 847). Westoff (1986) suggests that being a mentor is a matter of "boosting one's ego." Further, for the mentor it is a chance to pass on the lore acquired from years of perfecting skills and to "bask a bit in the admiration and attention of someone eager to learn those skills" (p. 116).

Negative Aspects of Mentoring Relationships

Westoff and Kram (1983) cite several negative aspects of mentoring relationships in contrast to the benefits that researchers examine. Much research has been done on the tensions of a mentoring relationship. Westoff (1986) notes that one such tension includes sexual attraction, regardless if the relationship is cross-sex or same sex. Kram (1983) points out that "...since respect and admiration underlie all of these close relationship, the natural fallout can be sexual attraction" (p. 614).

Negative Aspects of Acting as a Protege

Negative aspects that proteges face are a narrow area of study, but they do exist. To become the protege of a higher ranking mentor in the same organization could mean years of service and "gofering" for the lower level manager. Another disadvantage that the mentoree typically has to deal with is that mentors are often hard to meet and recruit. Westoff (1986) advises that this process could involve,

"Establish(ing) long-term contacts by staying

in touch with people you encounter at meetings and on committees that involve potential mentors. Circulate your ideas and results to these people and arrange luncheons and discussions" (p. 118).

Proteges should "be flexible enough for your mentor's need. Be dependable, even if it means rescheduling your vacation or a weekend away. Mentors should not expect their proteges to be on 24-hour call, but crises do come up" (Westoff, 1986, p. 118).

Negative aspects may also lie in the communication between the protege and the mentor. For example, a protege may feel so loyal to a mentor that he/she may hamper his/her ability to discuss his/her career needs (Johnsrud, 1990). It can sometimes create different expectations in the long-term when proteges and mentors focus on the short-term progress of the protege's career (Johnsrud, 1990). The protege can appear to be "ungrateful" if this happens.

Negative Aspects of Acting as a Mentor

Disadvantages also exist on the part of the mentor. The functions that a mentor serves often require an enormous amount of effort and time involving years of dedication to a single person. He/She provides, "coaching, visibility, protection, and a strong interpersonal bond between the mentor and mentee..." (Bullis & Wackernagel, 1989, p. 200).

Women in Public Relations

Lukovitz (1989) claims that by the year 2000 more than 80

percent of people entering the work force will be women, minorities, and immigrants. Due to the fact that the public relations industry is an increasingly attractive career for women, many of these women will enter the field. In fact, according to Lukovitz, "... as ever-growing numbers of women have entered public relations during the past two decades, their status within it has increasingly come to be intertwined with the larger issue of the field's overall progression" (p. 14).

Yet women are still facing problems when they attempt to achieve management status in public relations (Toth & Cline, 1991). Toth and Cline (1991) indicate,

"Women are victims of sexual bias, either through overt acts of sex discrimination or because they are perceived differently on such attributes as managerial motivation, willingness to sacrifice work over family demands, and ability to command top salary" (p. 161).

How have so many women become successful in the public relations field? There are literally hundreds of women who are the owners, presidents, and executives of public relations firms and business corporations, as I found when I reviewed the Public Relations Society of America's membership list. How are these successful women affecting the newer generation of public relations practitioners and managers?

Chapter 2: Purpose and Method

Rationale for the Present Study

Little research has been done on the mentoring relationships among women (Miller, 1988). Even less research has been done on mentoring relationships in the field of public relations. Researchers should study the area of protege attraction more closely, i.e., what qualities attract a protege to a mentor, and vice versa? They should also examine how women's careers are affected by these relationships. Hence, I formulated the following research questions:

R.Q. #1: How are female proteges in public relations affected by a same sex mentoring relationship?

R.Q. #2: How are female mentors in public relations affected by a same sex mentoring relationship?

Method

Subjects

The Public Relations Society of America provides a list of demographic information about their members, including their career field and addresses. Using this list, I surveyed women in the public relations field from the Chicago and New York areas. These two metropolitan cities are known for their heavily saturated public relations market. Respondents' identities were kept confidential. The last question on the survey asked for volunteers to participate in follow-up interviews. Only then

were the names of the subjects revealed. The sample size was 100. The response rate was 35%. Of these women, the average subject had thirteen years of experience in the public relations field.

Instruments

Survey

I revised a questionnaire originally developed by Dreher and Ash (1992) which was administered in this study. The survey investigates "the functions and qualities of the mentor relationship" (p.28). The scale was then modified by Angela Sweeney (1993) to study mentoring relationships in the real estate industry. I adapted the questions to fit the public relations industry by changing real estate terms to the equivalent public relations terms. Also, I added questions concerning the affects the sexes of both the mentor and the protege had on the mentoring relationship.

Interviews

Six follow up interviews were conducted with women who work within the public relations industry to investigate the mentoring relationships in further depth and detail. Five of the interviews were conducted via telephone, and one was in person. Regardless, all of them lasted from twenty to thirty minutes. Interview questions were developed by Angela Sweeney (1993), and I adapted them for the public relations field. Interview questions included information regarding position and duties, as well as the history and functions of the mentoring relationship,

career success, and the how the sexes of the mentor and the protege affected the relationship.

Ethical Considerations

The sex of my subjects was relevant to my research topic and, it was difficult to be objective, because I am a feminist. I found myself hoping that women would be more beneficial than men in both the mentor and protege positions. I was also hoping that same sex mentoring relationships would be more beneficial than cross sex mentoring relationships. However, I remained as objective as possible.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to examine this study's research. This triangulation contributes to both the validity and reliability of the study.

The survey administered has both reliability and validity because it has been used to measure the advantages and disadvantages of mentoring relationships in Angela Sweeney's thesis, and the current study's results were consistent with hers when it came to the general advantages and disadvantages of mentoring relationships. Both studies found that there is no significant correlation between same sex mentor relationships and advancement of either the protege's nor the mentor's career.

The survey itself included a Mentoring Scale developed by Dreher and Ash (1991). This scale was constructed by selecting items from previous research on psychosocial and career functions (Kram, 1983). The scale was tested for validity and

reliability using a factor analysis. In addition to Dreher's and Ash's (1992) test for validity and reliability, I also ran tests on each variable in the survey. Results indicated that the method was both reliable and valid with all variables scoring at least .80.

Quantitative Analysis

The majority of the survey is the Mentoring Scale, which is quantitative, and was examined accordingly. All demographic information was tallied and broken down into percentages according to the characteristic.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 approximately here.

The mean and standard deviation of each variable were then calculated.

Insert Table 3 approximately here.

Qualitative Analysis

Survey

The survey also includes a quantitative questionnaire, in which respondents were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of being involved in either a same sex or cross-sex mentoring relationship. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that counting data in qualitative analysis keeps the researcher

"analytically honest," and "protects against bias, and can often verify a researcher's hunch" (p. 215). Therefore, the terms describing mentors were counted.

Insert Table 4 approximately here.

Interviews

The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for qualitative analysis; they enhanced the surveys by going further in depth with detail about mentorships in public relations. Responses were examined using Miles and Huberman's (1984) content theme analysis. This method is helpful to examine interpersonal relationships, and allowed me to note recurring patterns and themes which "pull together a lot of separate pieces of data" (p. 216).

This was done by simply finding patterns and linking them together. "The human mind finds patterns so quickly and easily that it needs no how-to-advise. Patterns just happen almost too quickly" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 216).

Insert Table 5 approximately here.

Chapter 3: Results

Survey

Of the public relations practitioners who responded to the mentoring survey, eight have never been involved in mentoring relationships, and 25 have been or are currently involved in such a relationship. Over 51% of the respondents are between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five. Ninety-four percent are full time workers, two percent are part time, and two percent are self-employed and set their own work hours. The demographic data of the respondents is found in Table 1.

Of those 25 subjects who were or are currently involved in a mentoring relationship, eight have been or are currently only a mentor, three have been or are currently strictly a protege, and 14 have been or are currently both a mentor and a protege.

Twenty-one percent of the mentor respondents had or have male mentors, and seventy-nine percent had or have female mentors. Of the protege respondents, forty-seven percent had or have male mentors and fifty-three percent had or have female mentors. The characteristics are found in Table 2.

The mentoring scale includes sixteen variables on the career and psychosocial functions of a mentoring relationship. The two variables with the greatest variable of means are: a) Conveyed empathy for the concerns and feelings discussed and b) Encouraged preparation for career advancement. T-test results indicated that female and male mentors did not score significantly higher

on any particular variable. In other words, there is no significant difference between the sexes of the mentors and proteges when it comes to the variables provided by the survey.

However, when qualitative questions were analyzed, results indicated noteworthy differences between same sex and cross-sex relationships. When asked how subjects have benefited from the involvement in a mentoring relationship, women from a same sex relationship responded with answers that pertained to the fact that their mentor and/or protege was of the same sex. For example, mentors responded with answers such as the following: a) "The corporate structure (is) still at times rigid for females. Having two female mentors as key players in the industry helped show me how to move upward in a male dominated structure.", b) "She taught me to go forward as a team, especially if dealing with the 'old boy' network of male clients. Also, as a team we were better able to relate to gender issues, as well as work issues.", and c) "She understands and knows how to continue to be a woman with femininity and feminine ways of dealing with 'typical' male responses."

In addition, female mentors had the following to say: a) "Female bonding," and b) "Both of these women gave me new enthusiasm for what I consider routine projects. They gave me a brighter outlook for the advancement of women in public relations" about their female proteges.

Respondents involved in cross-sex mentoring relationships

did not reply in the same manner. These respondents did not mention sex issues. While the mentoring relationship has also proven to be beneficial when it is/was cross-sex, rather, these responses related to strictly the career functions, and not psychosocial functions.

The last question on the survey asked the subjects to describe their mentor/protege using three descriptive words. These qualities are displayed in Table 4. Descriptive words that were tallied the most were: creative, friend, helpful, knowledgeable, professional, and supportive.

Interviews

Six interviews were conducted during March and April of 1996 with six women who work in the public relations field in the New York and Chicago areas. All six women have been involved in mentoring relationships at some point in their career, and only four are currently involved in such a relationship. The subjects who are not at the present time involved in a mentoring relationship, focused their answers to the researcher's questions on past relationships. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for content analysis (See Appendix C). The content themes are found in Table 5.

All six public relations professionals define a mentoring relationship similarly, and consistently with my operational definition of a mentoring relationship. Some of the functions of mentors mentioned by the subjects include, a resource for

information and expertise, a teacher, a professional counselor, a guidance counselor, a model, and an advisor. Metaphors such as "mother tiger" and "an uncle" were also used by two different interviewees to describe their mentors. The idea that the mentor's experience, capabilities, and skills be shared with the protege in order to enhance their career, is also important.

The questions that were asked in the interviews are found in Appendix B. Two were mentors, and four were proteges. The titles of the job positions that the mentors currently hold include, "Public Relations Manager" and "Account Supervisor." The protege's job titles are, "President," "Team Leader," "Director of Corporate Communications," and "Media Relations Team Leader." The six interviews are now divided into two groups, the mentors and the proteges.

Mentor Respondents

After positions were discussed, questions about the mentoring relationships were asked specifically. Ironically, both mentors have/had female proteges. One mentor claimed that she had been "assigned" to her protege through a formal work program and had no choice in the matter. The other mentor was first attracted to her protege because,

"She seemed to have a quick mind. She was enthusiastic. She was hard working. She had good foundation skills drilled into her... We shared a common outlook, and I thought she had enough flexibility

that she could take on a lot of learning on her feet. She was somebody that I wasn't going to have to spend a lot of time bringing up to speed" (Personal communication, March 27, 1996).

Both mentors agree that having a protege brings about a certain sense of pride. One mentor claimed that the best benefit for her has been,

".....working with somebody who still gets excited about the projects that (she) tend(s) to find run of the mill. She (the protege) tends to bring enthusiasm and energy to issues, and she (the protege) also has a very fresh perspective. ...It challenges me to think differently" (Personal, communication, March 27, 1996).

The other mentor feels glad to see someone so "motivated" and "who is willing to learn, and who wants to progress to the next level" (Personal communication, April 17, 1996 p. 80).

One mentor felt that the relationship has not necessarily helped in her career advancement, but that it had aided in her career development because while counseling her protege in career decisions it forced her to reevaluate her own options. The other mentor asserted that because she and her protege work as a team, they both rely each other in order to get their work done.

Both mentor respondents maintain that their relationships are more than just professional. In fact, one mentor says that

her protege often relies on her for emotional and psychological support because she has just completed school and is trying to "find her way." The other mentor has often helped her protege when she was experiencing personal frustrations with the job "protocol" and "hierachical problems." One relationship progressed so far along that, the mentor claims, "I think she pretty much knows what goes on in my personal life, and I know what goes on in hers" (Personal communication, April 1, 1996). The couple also often engages in social activities outside of work.

One of the mentor respondents claims that having a same sex mentoring relationship is a "different dynamic" than a different sex mentoring relationship. She says, "On one side you're more understanding and supportive of certain things, but on the other side, you're less willing to be understanding for the same reasons" (Personal communication, April 17, 1996). The second mentor claims that the relationship has not been affected by the fact that the mentor and the protege are the same sex.

The final question examines whether or not interviewees believe a mentoring relationship is important in career success in the public relations field. Both agreed that if a mentor has perspective and experience, he/she can teach a protege the skills necessary to succeed in the public relations field as well as other fields.

Protege Respondents

The second group of respondents, the proteges, were asked the same basic questions. All four of the proteges are female, and two of them had or have female mentors, one had a male mentor, and the last protege had both a male and a female mentor. The last protege focused on only the female mentor, but occasionally compared the two.

The proteges responded that they were first attracted to their mentors because of the mentor's experience, strong strategies, the way that the mentor conducted his/herself in business situations, and high respectability by others in the public relations field. While one protege was assigned her mentor in a formal work program, another was drawn to her mentor because they first "struck it up on a personal level" (Personal communication March 21, 1996).

The next question asks about the best benefit the proteges gained from being involved in their mentoring relationships. The responses range anywhere from career functions to psychosocial functions. One protege contends that she,

"...learned a lot about media relations through her (the mentor). I also learned a lot about management. I was able to utilize those skills to secure a higher level position, and be successful in that role" (Personal communication, April 1, 1996).

The next protege believed that her male mentor made her feel like she had a person that she could "unload on" about work

experiences (Personal communication, April 1, 1996). Another woman protege claims that her female mentor made her feel confident through the professional and interpersonal support the mentor displayed for her. Finally, the last protege claims that there were actually two advantages that she received from her female mentor. She not only learned information that could not be taught in a classroom or from a text book, but also she availed an interpersonal friendship with her mentor.

The women with male mentors claim their relationships did not necessarily help to advance their careers. One of them states, "I would talk to my mentor as just another piece of my work load that could be scheduled, managed, and contained" (Personal communication, April 1, 1996).

On the other hand, the woman who had experienced mentors of both sexes asserts that even though her career was advanced by her male mentor, the relationship that she had with her female mentor impacted her career even more. She says that her mentor taught her,

"...how I conduct myself, understand how the politics work, what to reveal, what not to reveal.

We did have discussions about how men perceived women... Her and I would talk a great deal about how to circumvent that (chauvinistic) attitude- how to dress, how to conduct yourself. We talked about everything from eye contact to literally

what color hose you wear" (Personal communication, April 1, 1996).

The following question examines the "closeness" of the mentor relationships. While the one protege with a male mentor did not rely on her mentor for personal strength and warmth and referred to her mentor as having "an uncle" type of role, all of the proteges with female mentors did. Two of the proteges rely/ied on their female mentors for personal support when they were having problems with their family life. One situation was described as follows:

"I moved out there (California) when I was married, and ended up going to get a divorce. I had no family or friends out there. She (the mentor) was very supportive, extremely supportive" (Personal communication, April 8, 1996).

The other reports that she relied on her mentor on, "any number of occasions". She depicts one situation as follows:

"...when you work with someone that closely, and they really want you to succeed, you become friends. When you're having a hard time in life in general, or like me, I'm a mother of two. I found it very difficult to balance my home life with this new business I had. It was nice. I could just sit and kind of bitch to her... She

was a good shoulder to lean on..." (Personal communication, April 16, 1996).

The last protege declares that she considers her mentor a friend and, that "...she showed great depth of feeling and kindness" (Personal communication, March 21, 1996), when she was put in a confrontational situation at work. She went as far to say that her mentor defended her "like a mother tiger would have." Also, the protege that reports having both a female and a male mentor, asserts that although the same sex mentoring relationship was a "definite friendship that went beyond the professional mentoring level", the other relationship did not end as well. In fact, she alleges that, "it turned into a sexual harassment situation."

Two of the three same sex mentoring relationships extended beyond work hours. One of the same sex mentoring relationships and the one opposite sex relationship did not extend beyond the work place.

All of the women proteges feel that having a mentor in general, is very important, but should not be forced. As far as the question of which sex should be involved with which sex in a mentoring relationship, the proteges were very open about their opinions. The one protege with a male mentor felt that if both parties in the relationship are willing participants, it could benefit both parties regardless of their sexes. A protege that was involved in a same sex mentoring relationship thought that

although both sexes are receptive to a mentor type relationship, it is easier for women to mentor other women. She hypothesizes that, "Maybe it's the ego thing. What I have found in managing men is a man has a very hard time taking direction from a woman and being a protege to a woman" (Personal communication, April 8, 1996).

Another protege participant in a same sex mentoring relationship had this to say,

"...there are things that you couldn't possibly understand until you have stood in a woman's shoes. So there are things that he (a male) couldn't possibly help me with that a woman needs to know" (Personal communication, March 21, 1996).

The last protege also had a female mentor, and she agrees with the majority opinion. She retorts, "...we (women) help each other out because there's not a heck of a lot of help coming out of our male counterparts. So you rely on one another because you can kind of understand the difficulties" (Personal communication, April 16, 1996).

Chapter 4: Discussion

Limitations of the Study

A few limitations exist in this study. First, the sample itself. While the size seems to be sufficient for the study's purposes, it is important to note that it is collected from only two cities, Chicago and New York. Both of these cities are known for their concentration of public relations practices and are located in separate regions of the United States; yet this study is limited only to those regions. It would be helpful to expand the study to include other major metropolitan cities, like Washington D.C. and Los Angeles, which are also heavily concentrated with public relations practices.

A second limitation has to do with the wording of the survey. Many respondents commented on the fact that it is written in the present tense, which excludes past mentoring relationships. A few indicated that they were commenting on their past experiences with such a relationship.

The third limitation also lies in the wording of the survey. Many respondents indicated that they had more than one protege or mentor, which was not taken into consideration in the survey. This was, however, taken into consideration while tallying the results. If the respondent indicated that they did, in fact, have more than one mentor or protege, and provided the sex of each, the extra parties were then included in the study.

Interpreting Results

Results indicated that 74% of the survey respondents are currently or have been involved in mentoring relationships. Mentors are important because they provide psychosocial and career functions to the protege. Same sex mentoring relationships amongst women in public relations are more beneficial than cross sex mentoring relationships in psychosocial functions, but not necessarily career functions. This information confirms the findings in Olian et al (1993). Another possible reason for this is that the number of women in public relations is increasing, and protege women may realize this and turn to successful women in public relations for guidance (Lukovitz, 1989). Therefore, women are learning and benefiting from the psychological advice of other women.

Conclusions from this study indicate that mentoring definitely does take place within the public relations field. It can be a valuable tool for both beginning and experienced practitioners, regardless of the sex of either the mentor or protege.

To answer the research questions, both the female mentor and the female protege in a same sex mentoring relationship are affected positively. For female mentors, female proteges provide the following psychsocial functions: a) A better sense of hope for the progression of women in public relations b) A strong female bond in male dominant organizations. For female proteges,

female mentors taught the following: a) How to continue to be feminine and successful in a male dominated organization, b) How to conduct themselves and move upward in a male dominated organization, and c) How to instill client security especially when working with or for an "old boy" network, all of which contribute to the success of the female protege.

While male mentors and proteges have also proven to help both the careers of the protege and the mentor, it seems that women benefit more from a same sex mentoring relationship because of the additional psychosocial functions that such a relationship can fulfill. A possible reason for this may be the fact that the commonality provides a bond and an understanding for the gender issues within the public relations field.

When asked whether mentoring relationships are encouraged or discouraged in the public relations field, professionals that work in a corporate setting felt that they were encouraged, while practitioners in an agency setting felt that they were discouraged, unless there was a formal program. Many interviewees feel that the competition amongst women practitioners that work in public relations agencies is common and fierce. Yet, they did not speculate the same about public relations professionals that work within corporate settings.

One reason for this is that many agency practitioners compete for the same accounts, while corporate public relations professionals are all working together to promote the image of

the organization for which they work. Most of the interview respondents speculated that mentoring relationships pose a threat to the mentor's job because the mentor revealed "tricks of the trade" to the protege. The fear is that the protege would steal accounts, clients, and even the mentor's job. As one respondent puts it, "...In public relations, especially if you're in an agency, is a dog eat dog competition. Every man for himself; every woman for herself. There's a little bit of a competitiveness that doesn't exactly nurture a relationship, meaning that if you're getting ahead (of me), you might be getting ahead at the expense of me" (Personal communication, April 1, 1996).

Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research include the following: a) Sample at least one more major metropolitan city in the United States. If this is done, the study would have more external validity. b) Revise the wording of the survey to include multiple proteges and mentors to account for both present and past mentoring relationships, or alternatively, word the questionnaire to focus on only a present or a past mentorship. c) Interview men asking the same questions that were asked of women in order to compare and contrast same sex mentoring relationships. d) Conduct the same study on men in the public relations to find out if the same applies to men as does to women.

Conclusions

According to this study, mentoring relationships are important to women in the public relations industry. By mirroring, acquiring, or learning the skills of a more experienced practitioner or professional, mentees are provided with the "tricks of the trade." The mentor gains a fresh perspective from the protege, and possibly, excitement for a project that he/she would have otherwise found routine.

On the other hand, women proteges in the public relations field can gain more from being involved in a same sex mentoring relationship than a cross-sex relationship. Although women proteges do not necessarily benefit any more career wise with a female mentor than with a male mentor, results of this study indicate that they do have the advantage of benefiting from psychsocial functions that a female mentor can provide. Perhaps one reason for this is that women relate to other women better, or that women have more in common with other women.

An interview respondent has another explanation. She claims that public relations,

"...is an industry that was very much dominated by men for many, many years, and in some arenas it still is. For a woman to share the information in a mentoring relationship to another woman, a more junior level person, it would help to develop more quickly, and probably rise quicker to higher levels within public relations" (Personal communication,

March 21, 1996).

Another respondent agrees with this opinion, and had this to say,

"I think that because when I started in this business fourteen years ago management was still dominated by men. It was very hard for women to get an account position; you usually started out as an administrative assistant or a secretary. That was very common" (Personal communication, April 16, 1996).

The opinions of the respondents agree with Lukovitz's (1989) findings. The number of women in public relations is, in fact, increasing, and the field is becoming predominantly women. With this change, less experienced women are taking advantage of the lessons that more experienced women in the field have learned about being a female public relations professional/practitioner.

While seeking a mentor or a protege, women should consider the results of this study. The fact is, women deal with issues in any business environment that men do not have to deal with. By learning from the career experiences of another woman, women public relations practitioners may gain priceless advice about forging ahead as a woman in public relations.

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Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Mentors

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Sex:		
Male	6	21.0%
Female	22	79.0%
Age of mentor:		
21-25	3	14.0%
26-35	9	41.0%
36-45	4	18.0%
46-55	5	23.0%
56-64	1	5.0%
Years of experience in public relations:		
0-5	5	23.0%
6-10	3	14.0%
11-15	3	14.0%
16-25	10	45.0%
26-40	1	5.0%
Full or Part Time:		
Full	21	95.0%
Part	1	5.0%
Have had a mentor:		
Yes	16	73.0%
No	6	27.0%

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of Proteges

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Sex of Mentor:		
Male	9	47.0%
Female	10	53.0%
Age of Protege:		
21-25	5	28.0%
26-35	7	38.0%
36-45	3	17.0%
46-55	3	17.0%
Relationship with mentor:		
Boss	12	67.0%
Co-worker	3	17.0%
Competitor	1	6.0%
Associate	1	6.0%
Missing data	1	6.0%
Still in contact with mentor:		
Yes	17	94.0%
No	1	6.0%

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviation of Mentoring Variables

Variable	Number of cases		Mean	Standard Deviation
Opportunity to Learn new skills	(1)	9	4.091	1.446
	(2)	7	4.239	.488
Introduced you to other managers	(1)	9	3.727	1.555
	(2)	5	2.857	2.193
Increased contact with other managers	(1)	8	3.364	1.804
	(2)	6	3.714	1.799
Helped you meet new colleagues	(1)	9	3.5	2.086
	(2)	6	4.286	.756
Helped you finish tasks	(1)	9	3.273	1.421
	(2)	7	3.857	1.215
Protected you from other managers	(1)	8	2.727	1.902
	(2)	4	2	1.633
Helped promote career interests	(1)	10	3.364	1.362
	(2)	8	4.429	.787
Kept you informed about company	(1)	8	3.364	1.804
	(2)	7	3.714	.756
Conveyed respect for you	(1)	10	4.5	.671
	(2)	8	4.571	.787
Conveyed empathy	(1)	10	4.227	.754
	(2)	7	3.857	.899

Note. * Group 1 represents females and Group 2 represents males.

(Table continues)

Table 3 continued
Means of Mentoring Variables

Variables	Numbers of Cases	Mean	Standard Deviation
Encouraged you to talk about problems	(1) 11 (2) 8	3.818 3.143	1.168 1.069
Shared personal experiences	(1) 11 (2) 8	4.182 3.857	.982 .690
Discussed your concerns about job	(1) 11 (2) 7	4.182 3.143	1.079 1.345
Shared career history	(1) 11 (2) 8	4.364 4.429	1.027 .787
Encouraged you to prepare for advancement	(1) 10 (2) 8	3.818 4.714	1.537 .488
Displayed attitudes and values similar to your own	(1) 11 (2) 8	3.727 4	1.009 .816

Note. * Group 1 represents females and Group 2 represents males.

Table 4
Qualitative Terms to Describe Mentors

Terms to Describe Mentor	Number of Responses
Creative	3
Friend	3
Helpful	3
Knowledgeable	3
Professional	3
Supportive	3
Demanding	2
Intelligent	2
Smart	2
Accomplished	1
Ambitious	1
Caring	1
Cautious	1
Competent	1
Concerned	1
Constructive	1

(Table continues)

Table 4 (continued)
Qualitative Terms to Describe Mentors

Terms to Describe Mentor	Number of Responses
Dynamic	1
Experienced	1
Focused	1
Friend	1
Hard working	1
Informal	1
Loyal	1
Motivated	1
Open-minded	1
Patient	1
Personable	1
Positive	1
Respectable	1
Savvy	1
Sharp	1
Sincere	1
Trustworthy	1

Table 5
Content Themes from Interview Sessions

Question	Response	Number
Words to describe Mentor:	A model	1
	Share their experience	1
	Professional council	1
	A resource	2
	Helps to enhance career	2
	Supportive	1
	Guide/Advisor	3
	Supplies you with expertise	1
	Helps you rise to the next level	1
	Interested in your career and success	1
	Helps get you to your goals and objectives	1
Qualities of a Mentor:	Brilliant at PR	1
	Strong strategist	1
	Highly respected	1
	Professional	1
	Articulate	1
	Bright	1
	Savvy	1
	Knows the field	1
	Knows about the company	1
Qualities of a Protege:	Experienced	1
	Quick mind	1
	Enthusiastic	1
	Hard working	1
	Good foundation skills	1
	Shared a common outlook	1
	Flexible	1
	Was not going to have to spend a lot of time bringing up to speed	1
	Pursiveering	1
	Tenacious	1
	Willing	1
	Detail oriented	1
	Organized	1
	Team player	1
	Willingness to go beyond the call of duty	1

(table continues)

Table 5 continued
Content Themes from Interview Sessions

Question	Response	Number
Outstanding Benefit of Relationship:	Learned from Mentor's Experience	2
	Friendship	1
	Had someone to "unload on" about job frustrations	1
	Confidence	1
	Working with someone who still gets excited about projects	1
	Working with someone who is motivated and works hard	1
	Flexible	1
	Showed great depth of feeling and kindness	1
Mentor has provided psychological support:	Friendship	2
	A good shoulder to lean on	1
	Knows how to be open mindedly supportive	1
	Added security	1
	It is easier for women	1
Women and mentoring:	More beneficial than having a male mentor	1
	Makes no difference	2
	More personal than a male mentor	1
	Competitive	1
	More nurturing	1

Appendix A: Survey

Eastern Illinois University
Speech Communication Department
126 Coleman Hall
Charleston, IL 61920

October 10, 1995

Dear Public Relations Professional:

I am a graduate student pursuing my Masters Degree in Communication with emphasis in Public Relations at Eastern Illinois University. In order to further understand the importance of mentor-protege relationships in Public Relations, I am conducting a survey among public relations executives, managers, and consultants.

Your participation would be most helpful and appreciated. Please complete the 15-20 minute long survey enclosed and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope, also provided, by November 5, 1995.

Thank you in advance for both your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kristen Kahles

Encl.

Appendix A

Mentoring Survey

For the purpose of this study,

mentor is defined as: someone who provides guidance, promotes skill development, and helps the novice learn the technical and political ropes of the public relations business

protege is defined as: someone who has been provided with guidance, has developed skill, and has been taught the technical and political ropes of the public relations field by a mentor

Please keep this in mind as you respond to the following items:

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age: ☐ 18-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35
☐ 36-40 ☐ 41-45 ☐ 46-50 ☐ 51-55
☐ 56-60 ☐ 61-64 ☐ 65 and over
3. How many years of experience do you have in Public Relations?
 Years
4. Do you currently work full or part time?
☐ Full Time ☐ Part Time ☐ Other
5. Do you feel that you have a mentor in your field?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
6. Do you feel that you have a protege in your field?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

If your response is yes to either questions 5 or 6 , then move on to question 7.

If your response is no to both questions 5 & 6, then move on to question 16.

7. What gender is your mentor?

☐ Male ☐ Female

8. What gender is your protege?

☐ Male ☐ Female

If you have answered male to both questions 7 & 8, then move on to question 33.

If you have answered male to either 7 or 8, please continue.

9. If your mentoring relationship is between females, how did it first develop?

10. What is/was your mentor's relationship to you?

☐ Boss ☐ Teacher ☐ Co-Worker
☐ Other (Please specify.) _____

11. What is/was your protege's relationship to you?

☐ Employee ☐ Student ☐ Co-Worker
☐ Other (Please specify.) _____

12. Are you currently in contact with your mentor/protege?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13. If your mentor or protege is female, how have you benefitted from this relationship?

14. Have there been any disadvantages in being involved in a single gender mentoring relationship? Please explain.

Please move on to question 17.

15. Why didn't you have a mentor or a protege?

16. How could you have benefited from a mentoring relationship?

Please move on to question 37.

Please place the number on the line that best fits with your response to questions 17-32.

DOES NOT APPLY AT MY OFFICE = 0

NOT AT ALL = 1

TO A SMALL EXTENT = 2

TO SOME EXTENT = 3

TO A LARGE EXTENT = 4

TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT = 5

To what extent has your mentor or protege...

- ___ 17. Given or recommended you for challenging assignments that presented opportunities to learn new skills?
- ___ 18. Given or recommended you for assignments that required personal contact with managers in different departments of the organization?
- ___ 19. Given or recommended you for assignments that increased your contact with higher level managers?
- ___ 20. Given or recommended you for assignments that helped you to meet new colleagues?
- ___ 21. Helped you to finish assignments/tasks or meet deadlines that would have otherwise been difficult to meet?
- ___ 22. Protected you from working with other managers or work units before you knew about their likes/dislikes, opinions on controversial issues, and the nature of the political environment?
- ___ 23. Gone out of her/his way to promote your career interests?
- ___ 24. Kept you informed about what is going on at higher levels in the company?
- ___ 25. Conveyed feelings of respect for you as an individual?
- ___ 26. Conveyed empathy for the concerns and feelings you have discussed with him/her?
- ___ 27. Encouraged you to talk openly about anxiety and fears that detract you from work?

- ___ 28. Shared personal experiences as an alternative perspective to your problem?
- ___ 29. Discussed your questions and concerns regarding feelings of competence, commitment to advancement, relationship with peers and supervisors, work/family conflicts?
- ___ 30. Shared history of her/his career with you?
- ___ 31. Encouraged you to prepare for advancement?
- ___ 32. Displayed attitudes and values similar to your own?

33. In what ways has your mentor been most valuable to you?

Please rank the following categories from the most valuable (1) to the least valuable (6).

- ___ Introduced me to influential people (contacts).
- ___ Warned me of potential pitfalls in the public relations field.
- ___ Provided professional information.
- ___ Provided constructive criticism.
- ___ Was friendly and considerate.
- ___ Helped to promote and advance my career.
- ___ Other (Please specify). _____

34. Does your office have an organized mentoring program?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Unsure

35. What are three words that you would use to describe your mentor/protege?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

36. To further investigate mentoring relationships, I will be conducting follow-up interviews with cooperating practitioners. If you would be willing to participate in a 30 minute interview for this project, please list the dates that you are available, your phone number, and/or e-mail address.

Name: _____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. All answers will remain confidential and anonymous. If you are interested in the results of this thesis project, please contact Kristen Kahles of the Speech Communication Department at Eastern Illinois University. (217) 581-6950 or E-mail K-Kahles 1 @ bgu. edu. 126 Coleman Hall Charleston, IL 61920.

Appendix B: Interview Grid

Appendix B

Interview Grid

CATEGORY	PRIMARY QUESTIONS
Career information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *What is your current position? *What are the general functions, duties, and responsibilities of your position? *How would you define a mentoring relationship?
History of Mentoring Relationship(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *How many mentoring relationships have you been involved in? *Would you currently consider yourself a mentor or a protege? *How exactly did you meet your mentor/protege, and who took the steps to establish this relationship? *What qualities in the mentor/protege attracted you to her/him?
Functions of Mentoring Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *What has been the best benefit that you have received from being involved in this mentoring relationship? *How has this relationship helped in your career development and advancement? *Do you remember any specific occasions when you have relied on your mentor for personal strength and/or warmth? *Does your relationship extend beyond the workplace or school? *Would you say that mentoring relationships have been encouraged or discouraged in public relations?
Women and Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *What sex is your mentor/protege? *How has this affected your relationship?
Mentoring and Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Do you think that having a mentor makes a difference in career success in the public relations field? *What would you tell a person entering the public relations field about mentoring?

Additional Questions

When did you first come into contact with your most recent mentor/protege? What was your position at that time? What was her/his position? Is her/his position currently the same?

What qualities do you think that you possess that first attracted your mentor to you?

How often do you maintain contact with your mentor/protege?

Has your mentor/protege taught you anything? If so, what?

What do you think that your mentor gains from being in this relationship? (personally/professionally)

What do you think that your protege gains from being in this relationship?

How long do you perceive your mentoring relationship lasting?

Would you say that mentoring relationships benefit one sex more than the other? If so, how?

Appendix C: Interviews

Appendix C

Personal Interview A

Note: All references to names and/or companies have been blocked out to insure the confidentiality of the interviewees.

DATE= MARCH 21, 1996

SEX= FEMALE

What is your current position?

"My current position is team leader."

What are the general functions, duties, and responsibilities of your position?

"Right now, I manage two people, and I'm responsible for the development of strategic direction, project development, and making sure that the projects are executed on time, on schedule, and all of that stuff."

How would you define a mentoring relationship?

"A mentoring relationship is, where I see it, is someone who has a lot of experience or is more senior and is willing to share their experience in a lot of the tricks of the trade early on to someone just entering the field or someone just who isn't as experienced in different fields, management, public relations, or whatever."

How many mentoring relationships have you been involved in?

"Two."

Would you currently consider yourself a mentor or a protege?

"Oh, that's an interesting question. Mentor."

How exactly did you meet your mentor/protege, and who took the first steps to establish this relationship?

"The first situation, I was a protege. It was right out of journalism school, and I was working for a newspaper, and the editor of the newspaper told me that you know, because of the work that I was doing,-- and he would kind of take it upon himself to start giving me daily tips or little comments on the articles I was writing. It kind of started to turn into a true mentoring relationship where he had a lot of information to share, not just about the skills of the job, the actual writing, but business perspective as well-- what the industry was like, how hard it was to get to certain positions you wanted to get to, what do you need to know, who do you need to know, that type of situation."

What about the other relationship, how did that start?

"The other one was my direct boss, and we struck it up kind of on a personal level. She was a marketing director and a public relations manager, and she started literally calling me into her office on a daily basis, similar to the first situation, and sharing with me a lot of things that were going on in her day-to-day business life, sharing those pieces of information with me to help with developing some of my own strategies, but also to use me as a sounding board for those ideas. So it was obvious that she respected my opinion and wanted my thoughts on those things, but also posed questions to me. Like, here's a situation that

came up with today; this is how I handled it; what would you have done? Or asking me, how I would do it before she had told me what she had done."

Marketing or public relations situations?

"Both. Because she was so involved at that point at a more senior level than I was, she was involved in meetings that I wasn't. So, there were business situations, and just how to handle yourself on a business level, how she conducted herself, how she kept her cool in certain situations, how she could, for lack of a better word, manipulate other people. Actually, the sign of a true leader is convincing other people to follow your opinion, or your way of wanting to accomplish a task, if you have true leadership ability. So, she would share with me the way that she worked to get other people to come to an agreement on a certain task, or how something should be handled or accomplished. So, we also looked at specific marketing tasks. A certain project would come up what we would do with it, we would brainstorm on it, and in a sense, she was using me as a sounding board. I was asking a lot of questions. She was answering what she would probably think of as very basic marketing questions, but because I didn't go to school for-- I went for journalism, I was learning a ton of information about marketing and business, and we also did a lot of day to day PR discussions. Most of those I posed to her."

Did she have a hard time getting a grasp on the PR concepts?

"Not at all. She was well versed in PR, and she could make recommendations, and sometimes we'd brainstorm. She did rely on on me, of course, as the expert in PR, but she certainly had her own thoughts, which I think she could handle."

What qualities in the mentor attracted you to her?

"Well, if I could focus on the second one, the woman?"

Yeah, of course.

"Because the first one didn't really pan out the way, I'd hoped it would. The second one lasted longer, and the quality that first attracted me to her was the way this particular person conducted herself in business in general, in meetings, in personal situations- extremely professional, articulate, very bright, had tremendous savvy from a business and marketing stand point. It was obvious that she was leaps and bounds ahead of everyone else. It was obvious she really knew her stuff."

What has been the best benefit that you have received from being in this mentoring relationship?

"I'd say there's actually two. I mean, I guess the primary benefit is that I learned so much information that you can't learn out of a book. It's not taught in school. It can only come from another person who has gone through the experiences themselves and can tell you what the pitfalls are, what to out watch for, when there's a common mistake. So, you know, I guess the benefit is learning from something that you couldn't possibly learn in school or in a book."

So, what would be the secondary that you were talking about?

Well, I developed a personal relationship with this person. We ended up, you know, becoming friends out of the relationship. Not only did I have a ton of respect and admiration for her as a business person, but I also admired her greatly on a personal level as well, as just someone who really had her act together. Someone who you'd truly admire and maybe want to be like her, if you could choose someone to be like."

How has this relationship helped in your career development and advancement?

"What I learned from this particular person, it would take a volume to record, just in terms of the business savvy I picked up her. And in terms of how that impacted my career, I think it impacted my career tremendously in how I conduct myself, understanding how the politics work, what to reveal, what not to reveal. We did have discussions about how men perceive women, and there's certain stereo types, you know, men tend to categorize women very quickly as being emotional, unstable, not being able to handle the 'big job'- 'we gotta give it to a guy' kind of attitude. Her and I would talk a great deal about how to circumvent that attitude- how to dress, how to conduct yourself. We talked about everything from eye contact to literally what color hose you wear."

Do you remember any specific occasions when you have relied on your mentor for personal strength and/or warmth?

"Yeah, I do actually. There was a set of circumstances where she sent me into a meeting to act in her place. It was a very senior level meeting. I, of course, appreciated the opportunity to go in. It turns out that the gentleman who was facilitating the meeting, he was one of our senior level vice presidents, he was really angry at her, and he was even angrier when I showed up in her place cause he had some things he was expecting to get back from her in terms of deadline material or whatever. She saw it as a very different set of circumstances where, he was imposing deadlines on people without going through the correct channel etc., etc. He blew up on me in front of the whole group of senior people, just screaming at me at the top of his lungs, swearing at me. In one respect, it wasn't directed at me personally, but how you can you almost not help but take it somewhat personally? It was very embarrassing and awkward, and before I burst into tears, I would have never done that in the same room, but I was so embarrassed. I didn't really know how to handle myself. I simply stood up and said you know, 'If you'd like to take this up off line, I think that you need to take this up with her one-on-one, because you're asking questions that I do not have answers to', and he's still screaming at me, as I'm walking out the door, going, 'Well, then, she shouldn't have sent you'. So, I was like a basket case going back to my office. I called her up, and she came to my defense. She got all emotional about it because I had gotten so upset, and showed great depth of

feeling and kindness, and felt very bad to have put me in that kind of position. I felt we had hit a certain bond level that day because she was totally on my side, and defended me like a mother tiger would have. She looked him up that afternoon, and I don't know exactly what took place between them, but, he called me and apologized about an hour and a half later."

Does your relationship extend beyond the workplace?

"Yes it did. We actually spoke so often about seeing each other socially, but we come from very different backgrounds. I came from like an upper-middle class. She came from, I don't know what that level is, a very wealthy level- very different social circles that we would travel in, but she often brought it up, because I really wasn't sure about how she felt about it, but she wanted to invite me over. She wanted to get together with me socially. It never actually came to fruition, but I know there was a definite friendship there that went beyond the professional mentoring relationship level. We talked about a lot of personal level things from time to time."

Would you say that mentoring relationships have been encouraged or discouraged in public relations?

"From a purely PR perspective, a mentoring relationship can help make very strong confident women. It's an industry that was very much dominated by men for many, many years, and in some arenas it still is. For a woman to share the information in a mentoring relationship to another woman, a more junior level person, it

would help to develop more quickly, and probably rise quicker to higher levels within public relations. I believe that 100%, and I would think that that would extend to any industry."

Do you think that having a mentor makes a difference in career success in the public relations field?

"Oh, I think it definitely does, because it can reaffirm. The things you learn in school are so different than what you actually have to apply in the real world. If you have, especially a woman mentoring a woman there are things, although if you had a man mentor as well, there are things that you couldn't possibly understand until you stood in a woman's shoes. So there are things that he couldn't possibly help me with that a woman needs to know. It could make a big difference in terms of a confidence level, and a knowledge level. Since I didn't have a mentor for many years early on, I could relate to not having one as well, where I didn't have a woman who mentored me in any way. I struggled to make sure that I was doing everything that I was supposed to be doing. I'd do a lot of extra leg work, which isn't all bad, because you have to learn things on your own as well. But at some point in your career I think it is so important to have someone to be a mentor to you. Like I said, it can reaffirm what you think you know is right, how you conduct yourself, is this the best way to do this, have I really learned everything I really need to learn. Most people are very, I have found, insecure, and a woman can struggle to get management

roles. They can sometimes be very insecure, once they get there, that someone can come take their job away, if I tell you all of my secrets, you're going to take my job away next year. I think that that goes for probably both men and women mentors. But you want someone who's self-confident, and really feels that they know their job well, they're not going to get displaced. They'll probably get promoted, maybe that person that they're mentoring will take their job, but they'll have moved on to another job." What would you tell a person entering the public relations field about mentoring?

"I think it's extremely important to find someone at some point, but it's not a matter of searching for someone. It's circumstances. It's truly circumstances. Don't expect to necessarily have one right away. You're lucky if you do, and it does happen. I did have one right out of journalism school. It was a man, and it was good for a couple of months. Then it went away, under not good circumstances. I guess what to expect, just expect that if you do find a good mentor, you're very lucky. Hopefully, you can keep passing the torch from woman to woman. You know, say, 'Okay, someone mentored me, now it's my turn to mentor someone else. Let me tell you all of the things that I've learned.' It may not happen right away, but when you do find it, hang on to it as long as you can."

Kind of on a different note, you know how you were talking about how your first mentoring relationship didn't end well, has that

affected the way you feel about sex and gender issues in mentoring relationships?

"Oh, absolutely."

Would you take on a male protege or acquire a male mentor?

"That's an excellent question. I think that I would be much more careful if I were still going to be the protege. I mean, I think you continue to learn because you move to different levels throughout your career. It's not necessarily in PR from a skills stand point, but from a business perspective because there's so much more to PR than just what's in the books. I would just be more cautious because it turned into a sexual harassment situation, and I was forced to quit the job (I didn't have to quit in the long run). But, it wouldn't affect me if I was going to help mentor a male protege. I think I'd feel pretty equal in terms of wanting to help. I like to share information, and help other people to get along. I don't think I'd be swayed too much by one bad experience. It was just one person."

Telephone Interview A

DATE= MARCH 27, 1996

SEX= FEMALE

What is your current position?

"The title is Director of Corporate Communication."

What are the general functions, duties, and responsibilities?

"Well, basically I manage all aspects of media relations domestically, provide consulting for media relations internationally, provide consulting for investor relations domestically. That pretty much covers the PR function. In advertising, I am involved in all of the aspects from budgeting to the final production of advertising world wide, as well as media purchasing and advertising research. That pretty much covers it."

How would you define a mentoring relationship?

"I sort of define a mentor as someone either in my own department or in another department that has been at the company a little longer than I have or has better or higher job title than I do, that would serve as professional council on many different issues including, not only career council, but XXXXXXXX council.

Somebody that could serve as a resource when I have questions about anything on employee relations to deciding how to best enhance my career through taking seminars or additional education, that sort of thing."

Would you currently consider yourself a mentor or a protege?

"Neither."

Have you been involved in mentoring relationships in the past?

"In a past job, for a short time."

Can we focus on that one, then?

"Sure"

In that relationship did you consider yourself a mentor or a protege?

"As a protege."

How exactly did you meet your mentor, and who took the steps to establish the relationship?

"My boss assigned me a mentor. It was a formal program."

Would you have been attracted to this person, as a mentor, had you not been assigned to the relationship?

"Well, the funny thing is, we were really kind of mismatched, and I ended up switching. But I guess the person that I ended up with had really a better overall perspective. It was a very large company and the person had a very good overall perspective, had worked at the company for quite some time, and had really seen the company making it through some down sizing, had seen some ups and downs in personnel, and really had a long term view of what it meant to be an employee at this company, essentially."

What was the best benefit that you received?

"I guess it made me feel not so isolated, and like I had someone that I could really unload on. You can sort of unload on your boss, but you can't really because that person is involved in

your review. You can sort of unload on a colleague, but you can't really because that person might have other agendas, closing their discussion. Human resources is a decent outlet, but their time is limited as well."

How has the relationship helped your career development and advancement?

"I wouldn't say it helped my advancement, but I would say it helped me focus more on what I was doing, and hence, I was, I believe, more productive because I was able to segment out what I would talk to my mentor about as just another piece of my work load that could be scheduled, managed, and contained. Rather than having it eat at me, and try to figure out what to do about things, and not running down blind alleys and trying to figure out things, and trying to hunt down information myself."

Do you remember any specific occasions when you have relied on your mentor for personal strength and/or warmth?

"Well, I guess not really in the extreme. But that person was definitely there when I was like, you know, 'I've been hearing there's going to be another down sizing here. Is that going to affect me?', as a fairly new employee, I was pretty freaked out. So, I'm not so sure about warmth or strength, but certainly the fact that the person had a long view and said, 'Look, you know, down sizing are typically just here to get rid of dead wood and to combine department. If you're doing a good job and they really want you here, you know, you'll be here.' So it was more

reassurance I guess."

Did your relationship extend beyond the workplace?

"No."

Would you say that mentoring relationships have been encouraged or discouraged in public relations?

"I'd say neither. I mean it also depends on the corporate environment. I mean, I know that in the PR agency setting things tend to be a little more competitive within the office. People want to work on the really cool accounts. And so it's difficult in the PR agency setting, yet it's probably a needed thing there, but it's probably harder to set up. Yet in a corporate environment, while I would love to do a program like this, there's really no corporate direction for it. And it would be really hard for me to set one up without a corporate direction because there's a lot of people outside of the department that would want a mentor."

What sex was your mentor?

"Male"

How did that affect your relationship?

"I guess, you know, he was very much older than me as well, so we were personally at different points in our lives. So, I suppose if there was any way that an out of work friendship would have blossomed, it really wouldn't have been between the two of us. Because we were really just not very compatible as people; we were very compatible as workers."

Do you think that having a mentor makes a difference in career success in the public relations field?

"Oh, I think it would. Like I said, when there's so much defocus that happens in public relations cause there's such an unpredictable work load, it would be nice to know that there could be a person that you could rely on to ask a lot of questions, so you wouldn't have to hunt around for a lot of it."

What would you tell a person entering the public relations field about mentoring?

"I would tell them that they need to keep an open mind, and it's not really for somebody who doesn't want perspective. You know, if you just want to have your own narrow view of the world, I mean I don't know why anybody would think that they would want that. You know what I mean? But certain people do want that. Certain people have a hard time hearing that they have faults, and that they could change, and that certain pieces of the corporation aren't the way that they ideally think that they should be. There are people that really aren't ready to hear that. So, you really need to have an open mind, and really be open to an open exchange on a personal level as well as about the company. You never should ask a question that you don't really want the answer to is sort of the caveat. If you're not at that point then, it's not the right time for you."

Do you have any contact with your mentor?

"Yeah. We call each other every once in a while. He's retired

now, and his wife is an artist, and is much younger than he is. So, he's always at these art fairs downtown Chicago, and every once in a while he'll stop by."

So would you still consider it a mentoring relationship?

"No not really. I mean it's more like he's my uncle. I see him a couple of times a year and you know?"

Would you say that mentoring relationships benefit one sex more than the other?

"I would think not. I mean, I would think that they would work a little differently, but I wouldn't think that they would benefit one more than the other. I could think of people on my team that of either sex that could very much use a mentor. But like I said that have to be willing to open up. In my experience a lot of men in PR or men in organizations tend to be very quasi about what their feelings or what they're going through in their jobs. They don't really want to let on to that because I think they feel that it's a certain sign of weakness or that they're not handling their jobs, especially if they are the primary providers within their families. I'm noticing that with my own folks. So, I know that they would benefit incredibly by a mentor, it's just a matter of are they willing to be in that relationship? But I don't think that one would benefit more than the other. I think if everybody is a willing participant in that relationship, it could benefit anyone."

Telephone Interview B

DATE= APRIL 1, 1996

SEX= FEMALE

What is your current position?

"My current position is public relations manager."

What are the general functions, duties, and responsibilities of your position?

"I am responsible for planning and coordinating the public relations strategies as a member of a worldwide marketing team for a large professional services organization. I'm also part of a group that works with many office locations marketing directors. So, I have a coordination function as well. Additionally, I'm responsible for media intelligence, which is electronic news feeds and monitoring those. And then handling some sensitive issues as well as a variety of related types of public relations work, such as working on XXXXX sponsorships and the like. So that's sort of the broad stroke."

"When you say "sensitive issues" are talking more or less about crisis management issues?

"Yeah. We like to call it sensitive issues so that it doesn't sound like we're having a crisis."

So, you do a lot of marketing management then?

"Yes."

How does that relate to public relations?

"We here at XXXXXXXX, because a lot of my co-workers are graduates

of integrated marketing communications programs, are big believers in marketing strategy embracing public relations in that they go hand in hand. So I often work, when we're talking about launching new service lines or releasing studies, or any of that sort of thing, I work closely with the marketing managers assigned to that service line to help them integrate the public relations angle into it. So, we may talk about how best to use collateral materials as well as develop a straight media relations strategy, or speaking engagement, or trade show opportunities there might be."

How would you define a mentoring relationship?

"I define a mentoring relationship as a supportive learning relationship where if I am the person being mentored, I have a resource to go to give me anything from answers to technical questions up through giving me career guidance. As a mentor, I think my responsibility in that relationship is to guide that person in a direction where they are positively learning and growing and to give input as to what possible challenges they might want to take on."

Would you currently consider yourself a mentor or a protege?

"Both. Probably more mentor."

How exactly did you meet your protege, and who took the steps to first establish the relationship?

"I met her through kind of another protege relationship that I had. It was somebody who sought me out in a networking

relationship, and we kept in touch in sort of a mentoring sort of thing. I was looking for someone to fill a position that somewhat reports to me, but has partial responsibilities and more general communications responsibilities as well. So, I sort of recruited this person, and now we work together. That's how we met."

What qualities in the protege attracted you to her?

"She seemed to have a quick mind. She was enthusiastic. She was hard working. She had good foundation skills drilled into her, because she had spent some time working in an agency. We shared kind of a common outlook, and I thought she had enough flexibility that she could take on a lot of learning on her feet. She was somebody that I wasn't going to have to spend a lot of time bringing up to speed."

Is she younger or older than you?

"Younger."

What has been the best benefit that you have received from being in this mentoring relationship?

"I think for somebody who has been in the field not a tremendously long time, but long enough that I've passed the early stages, I think the benefit to me has been that working with somebody who still gets excited about projects that I tend to find run of the mill. She brings enthusiasm and energy to issues, and she also has a very fresh perspective, kind of out of the box, thinking where there are times where after you've

done a project enough times, even though it may be a different situation where you approach it the same way, she's kind of a new dimension to that thinking because even if it may not work, she will suggest things that make me think, 'Yeah, why do we have to do it the same old way?' So, I think that it's been good for me in that respect. It challenges me to think differently."

How has the relationship helped in your career development and advancement?

"I don't know that it's helped advance my career development. I think that by mentoring her, it has helped me to focus on my own career development because when you're working with helping someone else make decisions about their career you inevitably start thinking about your own. So, I paid more attention to my own career probably because of it."

Do you remember any specific occasions when you've relied on your protege for personal strength and/or warmth? Or maybe when she's relied on you for the same?

"Yeah. She's probably relied on me a few times. I don't think that I've relied on her in that respect, but she has relied on me a couple of times when she has encountered what I would say are standard hierarchy problems, meaning that she encountered somebody who because their position was such that you can't really push them any harder than you've pushed them, was becoming a road block. She was experiencing a lot of frustration with getting something done, and she wasn't really too sure about the

protocol, and how to get around that road block. It became personally frustrating, which is always the key not to take those things personally. But we've discussed things like that. I think that happens, besides the organization that we're in, that happens probably more frequently than it should. I think that's kind of the sort of situation we've discussed on a more personal level."

Does your relationship extend beyond the workplace?

"Yes."

How so?

"We share common interests. So, there are times when we, and I have to say that the group that I work in is very socially integrated, so we as a group, and there's about forty people in my group, various little sub groups of those people, do socialize. So in that matter, yeah we socialize outside of work. You know, happy hour types of things, go do stuff on the weekends occasionally. I wouldn't say a really close type of friendship, but one where I think she pretty know what goes on in my personal life, and I know what goes on in hers. It's nothing like I'm sharing deep dark secrets, or anything like that. Yeah we do stuff on the weekends occasionally."

Would you say that mentoring relationships are encouraged or discouraged in public relations?

"Discouraged, I would say to some degree because people don't have a lot of time. Mentoring can be very time consuming. If

you really want to help somebody do something well, you should really take the time. If they're writing a business or PR plan for the first time, you should really take the time and go over it, instead of doing what's the easiest thing to do, which is to take it from them and redo it yourself. That's not really teaching them anything about what they have to do. Also, mentoring is giving people opportunities to be seen by those that could help them, meaning management and sometimes it takes a lot of preparation to get them to the point where they're ready to give a presentation to senior level management. That again is another time constraint factor. Additionally, I think public relations, especially if you're in an agency, is a dog eat dog competition. Every man for himself; every woman for herself. There's a little bit of a competitiveness that doesn't exactly nurture relationships, meaning that if you're getting ahead, you might be getting ahead at the expense of me. So, I'm not sure if I want you to shine, I want our group to do well, but I don't know that I want you, individually, to do well because that might negate some of the things that I've done. Because a lot of the relationships, for example when we hire people out of an agency or whatever, a lot of these agencies they could all do the work, it's just personal relationships, so you covet those personal relationships, and you cultivate them and if I had a client I would be reluctant to let my protege get too much in front of them because it's my relationship. It's my ticket to leveraging

either a greater salary or more management responsibility from the firm that I work with. Because of that, I think the best thing a person could do is probably not to have the kind of relationship I had, where, I mentored somebody who works with me/for me whatever. The best relationship is to be mentored by somebody who has the same perspective as your boss, but not your boss so that they can be more generous in giving you ideas like, you know, 'Hey, you're never going to get any more exposure by working for that person so you need to get away.' I think that that's the sort of thing that your boss is never going to say that, because I think that they're selfish. That's a difficulty."

How has the fact that your protege is the same sex as you affected your relationship?

"It hasn't affected it as much as I would think. Now, when I've been the protege I have found it to be competitive to some degree. Because I think that women in the work place are still kind of finding their way, and for some reason we think that we need to prove ourselves a lot more than others. I haven't found it to be terribly competitive. I think there have been a few situations that have come up where she might have felt slighted, because I had been asked to do a project, and I think if it were a guy she may not have felt that way. That's very fuzzy logic there, and I'm not sure that I have any concrete evidence behind it. It's more of a feeling. But I think that women are much

more sensitive to that sort of thing than men are. I think that because there's a personal aspect to mentoring you really have to like the person as a person. It's a little more difficult to do with people who are not the same sex. Although I, now that I'm a little farther along in my career, have male mentors. I don't always feel that it's stuck with women- women to women or whatever."

Do you think that having a mentor makes a difference in career success in the public relations field?

"Yes, because otherwise, you feel like you're just spinning your wheels, it gives you a little boost and a little perspective you really can loose that working in public relations."

What would you tell a person entering the public relations field about mentoring relationships?

"Find one. I think that, again, I would not suggest it be someone that you have a direct working relationship with, but I think that if you're in a large organization, somebody who is in a parallel position to your boss, meaning another supervisor or the like, as long as it's not someone who is perceived as threatening to your boss that you have this friendship with this other person. Sometimes the best place to have a mentor is with somebody in a similar situation, yet not in your particular agency or environment. Meaning, if I work for X, maybe I know somebody who is a supervisor over at Y, I could turn to them to get a little perspective that's not all tied up in company

politics. And I don't think it's difficult to meet people in that kind of relationship. You probably meet a lot people outside of your own firm if you do any sort of volunteer work or anything like that. I think that that's been a good resource for me. I think it's important, because otherwise, you can really stay in a slot and not move ahead because no one's telling you, 'Hey, this is what you should do', or 'You should go for a project and try to get a piece of it.' You know, that sort of thing. You need someone else to give you perspective."

When did you first come into contact with your protege?

"About a year ago."

Was your position the same as it is now?

"Yeah."

Telephone Interview C

DATE= APRIL 8, 1996

SEX= FEMALE

What is your current position?

"Media Relations Team Leader Systems Management Division"

What are the general functions, duties, and responsibilities of your position?

"It's to achieve or obtain publicity for each of the systems management discipline through various means including, product announcements, editorial opportunities, speaking engagements, this is securing each of these, placing and writing bylined articles, developing a strategy that ties together systems management with the XXXXXX corporate message and other divisional messages."

How would you define a mentoring relationship?

"I think a mentoring relationship is one in which an individual can model another individual's skills and capabilities and talents and attempt to learn and grow and develop by mirroring or trying to model those talents."

Are you currently in a mentoring relationship?

"No, I'm not."

How many mentoring relationships have you been involved in?

"I'd say two."

Let's focus on one. In that one, would you consider yourself the mentor or the protege?

"I was a protege."

How exactly did you meet your mentor, and who took the steps to establish this relationship?

"I actually moved to California and had a career in marketing and PR in the financial service industry. Through a placement agency, I got an administrative function just to start to get to know the high tech industry when I was in California. I was just doing an administrative role, while I was interviewing for other positions. The Director of Media Relations sought me out and said, 'I have a managerial spot open in my group, but I really want you to come on board, and I will lower my rec to a specialist division. I just think that you have a lot of talent and would grow in this particular spot.' And I didn't want to take it, and she actually doubled my salary. So, I accepted the position. But I was very apprehensive because upon first meeting her she didn't seem like someone who I could work for very easily. She was very abrupt, and sort of seemed all over the map. So, she actually approached me, but when I got into the role, I was in a complete needy spot. I really didn't know about technology; I really didn't know about PR either, in the sense the way that they conducted it at this company. So, I started mirroring her, and modeling her, and listening, and adapting my skills to fit what the job required. I started reading and all sorts of different things."

What qualities in the mentor attracted you to her?

"She was brilliant at PR, brilliant. She was a very very strong strategist, very strong practitioner, highly respect from the president and CEO of the company, highly respected by the external PR agency, and just sheer results. I mean, what she produced was just phenomenal."

What has been the best benefit that you've received from being involved in this relationship?

"I think that I learned a lot about media relations through her. I also learned a lot about management. I was able to utilize those skills to secure a higher level position, and be successful in that role."

So, would you say that the relationship has helped to advance and develop your career?

"No question."

Do you remember any specific occasions when you've relied on your mentor for personal strength and/or warmth?

"Yes, I did. I moved out there when I was married, and I ended up going to get divorce, and I had no family or friends out there. She was very supportive, extremely supportive. I needed some extra time off. I needed some flexibility, so that I could determine what route I had to take, and she was terrific."

Did your relationship extend beyond the work place?

"Yes, at that point, and after that point."

Would you say that mentoring relationships have been encouraged or discouraged in public relations?

"That's a good question. I think they're encouraged. I think it's a very competitive field. I've never worked on the agency side, but what I've heard from a number of people, is that it's not as easily achieved there, as it is let's say at a corporation."

How has the fact that your mentor is the same sex as you affected the relationship?

"Well, I think that, very interestingly enough, the role that I played, I've always been a very good 'teacher's pet', and I think that she liked that. She didn't feel threatened by that. She was a very secure individual, but yet, my counterpart I think made her feel threatened in some respects. But I didn't play that role, so, it was a very comfortable teacher-student situation. But, when I started within a six month period I started rising up in the organization, which, really reflected well on her. I was a very huge risk, I was told there by upper management later in my career, there at XXXX. They told me that they basically saw me as an admin. person, only because I came in and did that work as a contractor. She took a huge risk, and I ended up rising above my associate there in a very short time. So, I think that it was a leader-follower type role, it was fine. I don't think that it was threatening to either one of us. Then, as it grew, and it became more leveled off, she became very comfortable with my loyalty. I've been in situation that I've found threatening, not with myself, but maybe outside where the

individual is not comfortable with- there's not a loyalty built
There's an uncomfortable situation there."

Do you think that having a mentor makes a difference in career success in public relations?

"I definitely do. I definitely do. I think that individuals can learn through experience, but experience coupled with a mentor makes a big difference. You learn things from other people's experience that sort of advance you quicker."

What would you tell a person entering the public relations field about mentoring?

"I think that mentoring is a very positive experience. I think that it is somewhat luck. Let's say that you are hired into a role, and didn't find someone to be your mentor, you can't help it. But typically there are people, what happens is, you'll find someone that has some qualities that you mentor, and other qualities in someone else. You know what I'm saying? If you can't find one mentor who is very well rounded, a lot of times you'll find multiple people who have different skills that you will look to to grow."

Do you still maintain contact with your mentor?

"Oh, absolutely."

How often?

"Once a month."

Would you say that mentoring relationships benefit one sex more than the other?

"I might be wrong, but my bet is that women are more receptive to that. I tend to get that feeling because -- Well, I don't think that's true. I think that both are receptive to it. I think it's easier for women. I don't know why. Maybe it's the ego thing. What I have found in managing men is a man has a very hard time taking direction from a woman and being a protege to a woman."

Telephone Interview D

DATE= APRIL 16, 1996

SEX= FEMALE

What is your current position?

"President."

What are the general functions duties, and responsibilities of your position?

"Well, I'm also owner of the company. So, it's not only all of the creative and strategic thinking on behalf of the client, it's new business development, overseeing a staff of four, and that includes an account supervisor, an account executive, a junior account executive, and a clerical. It's budgeting for all of the clients, overseeing the billing of the clients and the financing of the business, and that's pretty much it."

How would you define a mentoring relationship?

"I would define it as someone, as a mentor, who could supply you with expertise and guidance in a way that helps you to develop your own skills. Someone whose experience can help you with problem solving, and who can help you to rise to the next level of management."

How many mentoring relationships have you been involved in?

"On both sides of the fence, both as the mentor and the protege, I would say about twelve."

Would you currently consider yourself a mentor or a protege?

"At this point, a little bit of both, because I still have

mentors."

Focusing on one, would you consider yourself the mentor or the protege in that one?

"The protege."

How exactly did you meet your mentor, and who took the steps to establish this relationship?

"I met my mentor, I guess about twelve years ago. I worked at a PR agency, and she worked at a support company, a public relations support company. We worked on a number of projects together. Over time, she rose in her position, and actually opened up her own company, and I was a client to that company on the agency side. What happened is, when I decided to step out on my own, she became my mentor. She would sit down with me and talk to me about the steps that I needed to take to set up my own business, you know, how to fill out the DBA forms, how I should source a lawyer to incorporate. She told me how much I had to have in terms of fee before I could start hiring people, explained to me how to find and interview book keepers, because she had done all of that. She had kind of learned through her mentors and experiences that happened, and so when I turned to her and said, 'Gee, I'm thinking about taking this big step. What do I do?', she said, 'I'll help you. I'll guide you through the process.'"

What qualities in the mentor attracted you to her?

"Besides experience, I think the fact that we'd worked together

for so many years, and she felt that I had what it took to succeed. I think she probably saw in me a lot of the qualities that she, herself, possessed. And I think that's very important. I think that any mentoring relationship that I've ever been involved in, the people who tended to be my mentor, and the people who are my proteges now, were and are a lot like me. And also my proteges, the people that I've hired and the people that I'm trying to bring along in the business, are people that I see things in them that I admire, I think because, you know, you see a reflection of yourself."

What has been the best benefit that you've received from being involved in this mentoring relationship?

"I think just a feeling of confidence, because when you have someone that believes in you, enough to put themselves and their time into the relationship, you succeed. The confidence that you gain from that makes everything else fall into place."

So would you say that this relationship helped in your career advancement and development?

"Oh absolutely."

How so?

"I think that if I didn't have my mentor helping me out, it would have been much harder for me to step out on my own and start my own company. She had already had a very successful business, and when I needed a place to set up, she gave me an office with a desk, so there were phones, fax machines, everything else I

needed in terms of a physical work space until I was on my feet and had clients. Then, she introduced me to a landlord, and I found my own space in the same building. So really, without that person, I probably could have done it on my own, but it would have been a lot more difficult. It would've been a lot more expensive, and it would've taken me a lot longer to accomplish what I needed."

Do you remember any specific occasions when you've relied on your mentor for personal strength and/or warmth?

"Oh sure. Any number of occasions, because when you work with someone that closely, and they really want you to succeed you become friends. I mean, you talk about more than just business. When you're having a hard time in life in general, or like for me, I'm a mother of two children. I found it very difficult to balance my home life with this new business I had. I was nice. I could just sit and kind of bitch to her, I don't know how else to put it. She was just a good shoulder to lean on, and to say, 'I go through the same thing. It'll all work out. Don't worry about it; take it one step at a time.' So, yeah, there have been many occasions when I've leaned on her. And now that I'm in a position that's comparable to hers, now she leans on me. She knows that I can understand how it is to be a small business owner. Kind of understand the trials and tribulations of employees coming and going, and cash flow problems, attorneys and accountants, and all of the other things that come with owning a

business. The role has sometimes reversed itself now."

Did your relationship extend beyond the work place?

"Not particularly, no."

Would you say that mentoring relationships have been encouraged or discouraged in the public relations field?

"I wouldn't really say either. Nobody ever really came to me until recently, PRSA just started a mentoring program. I got a letter in the mail asking me if I'd like a mentor, we'll match you up with a fellow from the PRSA. I wasn't interested in that because it wasn't someone that I had a relationship with, and I didn't want a stranger looking into my business practices.

There's no foundation of trust, or a relationship there, or a history, so I wasn't comfortable with that. I think people find their own mentors, and it depends on the kind of person you are. I know that there were a lot of people, as I moved along in the business, who were willing to help me, but it was more a question of my asking for the help. I mean they'd say, 'Gee, if you ever need anything', but it was up to me, then, to take the next step and say, 'Yeah, I do need something, and can you help me?' Test the limits of the offer to see if they're genuine. It's not something that's so much discussed."

How has the fact that your mentor is the same sex as you affected the relationship?

"I have found that most of the people who have helped me along have been women. I think that because when I started in this

business fourteen years ago management was still dominated by men. It was very hard for women to get an account position; you usually started out as an administrative assistant or a secretary. Where as, I graduated from Syracuse, a bachelors in PR, and someone from my graduating class started as an account executive, when they told me I had to start as a secretary. That was very common. And so, I think what happens is as a woman I belong to a lot of female networking organizations and we help each other out because there's not a heck of a lot of help coming out of our male counterparts. So, you rely on one another because you can kind of understand the difficulties."

Do you think that you relied on your mentor more than if she had been a male?

"I don't know because she wasn't. I really don't want to say because I have some male friend that have been very helpful. So, I really don't know. It probably wouldn't have been as personal a relationship; it would've been more just business."

Do you think that having a mentor makes a difference in career success in public relations, regardless of sex?

"Yes."

What would you tell a person entering the public relations field about mentoring?

"I would say pick your mentors carefully. Pick your mentors like you would pick your friends. Have a history before you ask for help; make sure that this is someone who does well and is

respected by others, someone who has a lot of personal integrity, someone that you feel genuinely wants you to succeed."

How often do you maintain contact with your mentor?

"Once or twice a week."

How long do you perceive the relationship lasting?

"I don't see it ending."

Would you say that mentoring relationships benefit one sex more than the other?

"Not necessarily."

Telephone Interview E

DATE= APRIL 17, 1996

SEX= FEMALE

What is your current position?

"Account supervisor."

What are the general functions, duties, and responsibilities of your position?

"Well, at this point it's a changing position because I was just promoted to the position. So, I'm now supervising in, what I would consider, a middle management position. I'm supervising other account staff and account staff, writing programs, seeing to the day to day functions of the PR campaign from its conception through its resolution, if you will."

How would you define a mentoring relationship?

"On in which, depending on which way you're looking at it as the mentor or the mentee, I see the mentoring relationship as one where you find someone who is interested in your growth and is in your success and helps you to get to your goals and objectives and helps you to meet them as best as they can. So in my situation I have people who work for me, who I want to see succeed and do really well. So, they may come to me as their advisor, just like in a college capacity where you go to a guidance counselor, but perhaps even more so because this is your career, and this person can help make you shine where you should

and give you the support that you need, critique when necessary but also give you praise."

How many mentoring relationships have you been involved in?

"Well, now I have a new mentor, it's a male so it's a little bit different. I guess about two or three other true mentors."

Would you currently consider yourself a mentor or a protege?

"Both."

Let's focus on one specific relationship, and I let you choose which one. In that relationship are you the mentor or the protege?

"Mentor."

How exactly did you meet your protege, and who took the steps to establish this relationship?

"Well, it's just one of those things where you end up working, I guess I have to backtrack a little to explain. This particular agency is a very non-hierarchical situation. So, I'm taking sort of a present situation, where pretty much people work in teams together. Yes, there is a structure where there are people who report to others. So, in my case I had a new account coordinator assigned to me, and I have some account executives that will be assigned to me to work on various projects for various clients. So, specifically for someone who is just starting out, I know what it was like to be in that position. I want to see them move from the entry level position to be a really good assistant to me. So, I've just been introduced to this person, and teaching

them the basic skills and explain to them the full scope of what they're doing. Yes, they're doing specific tasks to finish up their part of the project, but I'm trying to also give that person a sense of ownership so that they don't just feel like yes, I'm making photo copies, but why I'm making those copies in a certain order. There's a greater purpose to this in giving them the big picture, which I think is really important. A good mentor explains to you a little bit why you're doing this, delegates to you specific responsibilities, and gives you as much as you can handle without overwhelming you, not to hang you, but to know when to step back and say, 'I really need some more assistance or some more guidance.'

What qualities first attracted you to your protege?

"It doesn't really work that way. You don't just become. I guess you look for people who are willing. I mean this person was assigned to me so it's not like I had a choice per say. In general people who are brought into this company have shown certain qualities that we look for, pursiveering, perhaps tenacious, willing, detail oriented, organized, team players, show a willingness to go beyond the call of duty, in other words, seeing the next step of a project, knowing what to ask for. So, those are the qualities we look for before we hire somebody, kind of a set up, where the person comes in and the location is already there, but then you work from there and move further on."

What has been the best benefit that you've received from being

involved in this relationship?

"That I get someone who is motivated and really works hard. Who is willing to learn, and who wants to progress to the next level, and does see this as a career move and doesn't just see this as a job where you come to work and collect your pay check."

Would you say, and if so how, has this relationship in you career development and advancement?

"Well, because we work in the team situation here, without that person, I can't get my work done. We all rely on each other; we all need each other to fill certain functions, and therefore it's a give and take relationship from both senses. That's why I'm all for a protege, someone who's looking to the same thing for me. We all work together. It's the synergistic effect, where the sum of all parts is greater than the whole."

Do you remember any specific occasions when you have relied on your protege for personal strength and/or warmth?

"Yeah, I think that that happens a lot. Especially if you're talking about someone who is just out of school, and going through a lot of emotional and psychological changes in terms of being independent, finding their way, knowing how to handle professional situations, handling office situations that arise. Knowing how to be open mindedly supportive, diplomatically, not making a decision for them, but giving them the devil's advocate position, and letting them then decide how to handle a situation."

Does your relationship extend beyond the workplace?

"With some people, but with this particular person, not yet. I don't know her well enough. It may eventually do that."

Would you say that mentoring relationships have been encouraged or discouraged in public relations?

"I think that they're encouraged. Again, I've been very lucky because I've been in place that have encouraged it. I don't know if that's the norm or not though. There may be other large agencies and corporations where it's not that way, but I can't speak for those because I haven't been there. The places that I've chosen to work, I have found, have been positive feedback."

What sex is your protege?

"Female."

How has the fact that your protege is the same sex affected your relationship?

"It's certainly a different dynamic than male-female. On one side you're more understanding and supportive of certain things, but on the other side you're less willing to be understanding for the same reasons."

Could you maybe provide an example of that?

"That they've got their period so they feel lousy. Well, I get mine too, so, too bad. Suffer. I don't feel very sorry for you. I mean it's just a function of life. Take a pill; get over it; let's get back to work. If you feel really that lousy, then stay home."

Do you think that having a mentor makes a difference in career success in the public relations field?

"Yeah, I do. I think it makes a difference in any field because if you have someone who can really teach you the ropes they're going to make you a better employee, a better co-worker. You learn how to deal with situations. If you have someone who really looks out for your well being, you will also probably impart that as you get older, and then in the mentor position."

What would you tell a person entering the public relations field about mentoring?

"That that's an important feature to look for. To feel out some what in an interview, if that's the kind of the place that would provide that kind of support. Because that's a very who you know kind of a business as well, and it's such a small world that you'll probably end up running into other people again some point in your future. So, you want to make sure that the places that you go will help nurture you. Why would you go work for some place that could care less about you? So, you might as well go to another place. There's plenty of places out there that will look after your well being."

How long do you perceive your mentoring relationship lasting?

"It will go on for quite some time. It depends how long that person decides to stay here. The last person that I was a mentor to, she was with the agency as an intern and then joined the company, and it was close to two years time. I see her, and we

still talk. She's in another place, so it's kind of an ongoing relationship. It never really ends. The ending, I think, is more determined by what happens to you in your life."

Would you say that mentoring relationships benefit one sex more than the other?

"No, I don't think that they benefit one more than the other.

Although, I would think that it's probably more common among men because they've been in the work force longer. That's where the good old boys network comes from. That's why they call it that, you know. And I think women have necessarily done as good a job, and need to learn how to do that. We'd do it a little bit differently though because we're more nurturing in general, but because we've had to be like men in order to succeed until now, to kind of be like the guys, and now the world has gone back a little bit where you could still be a woman and have a managerial style and have mentoring qualities."